11: Leakey E-5 (no date) 1930 FL12 Masai FL12
Kenya

PREFACE.

1/4 In the past very little detailed work on the social life of the Masai has been attempted,
115 since such investigations cannot well be made through interpreters, while few, if any, Europeans speak the Masai language sufficiently fluently to make such an investigation in that language.

[122] Although I cannot claim any knowledge of the language of the Masai, I have been fortunate enough to become friendly with four Masai who speak Kikuyu fluently, and as I speak Kikuyu as well as I do English I was able to learn something from them about their customs.

[124] These notes are of necessity brief and full of lacunæ, since I avoided asking direct leading questions, though tempted to do so, and also because they do not include information unless it was obtained from or corroborated by more than one informant.

[101] The Masai from whom this information was obtained came from that part of the Masai Reserve which lies to the west of the Mau Escarpment, and I was not able to find out whether these customs prevailed among the whole of the Masai group.

My two principal informants were an old woman, past child-bearing, and her married son, aged about 35 (I have unfortunately lost the paper with their names).

[98] [128] They were insistent that most of these customs have been slightly modified since government control has been set up, but I have, notwithstanding, written mainly in the present tense.

PART I.—CHILDHOOD.

844 *Birth.*—Among the Masai, birth takes place in the woman's own hut in her husband's village and she is attended by an old woman of her husband's family. Other women may be present, but no men. If a woman is having her first child she assumes a stooping position supported by other women, as the first child is considered more difficult to deliver; otherwise a woman giving birth to a child lies upon the bed. The acting midwife cuts the cord with a special instrument,[1] and both the woman and new-born child are washed with warm water. The placenta is carried out and thrown down in the cattle yard, but is not buried. As soon as the child is born its sex is ascertained in order that an animal may be bled to supply blood for the mother to drink. If the child is a boy the blood is obtained from a young bull, and if a girl, from a young heifer. (For method of procuring blood *see* Part IX.) From the day of

[846] birth onwards many sheep and goats are killed to supply meat and fat for the mother in order that the child may grow up strong, but these animals have no special significance, and are not sacrificial or for purification purposes.

553 *Naming Ceremony.*—Children are not named until they can run about, and unlike
[107] some other East African tribes, the child does not inherit any name from any particular relation.

[1] There is some mystery attaching to the instrument used, and I am not sure what it is.

18: Merker--ii G-8 (1895-ca.1908) 1910 FL12 Masai FL12

/Pages i-iv are title and dedication pages./

/v/ Foreword to the First Edition

121 Advancing culture is more and more rapidly shaping and polishing the customs of the so-called savage peoples. What it takes hold of first and smooths over most thoroughly is precisely what is peculiar to the savage, in which his doings, his thoughts and feelings are most clearly reflected. This is particularly true of those primitive peoples whose customs and views stand in sharp contrast with our principles of civilization and who must start a whole new life if they do not wish to perish. This, of [181] course, applies above all to the nomadic peoples, and especially to the militarily disposed among them, such as the Masai. Thus there is ever more urgently approaching us Europeans who live among these peoples the task of completing and perfecting our knowledge about them before it is too late.

Besides this scientific goal, the investigation of the natives of our colonies also pursues a practical purpose. The times during which we forced recognition of German rule with weapons and had to lead the natives, who, through their almost uninterrupted expeditions of war and raiding against one another, devastated the land and reduced the population, to peace by force are almost over. In serious pacifying work they must now be educated toward what, for their own advantages and those of their country, they are to become. Where and how the educator must work, enlightening and advising, to attain this goal, a knowledge of the thoughts and feelings, of the character and customs of the people, will teach him.

• 124 In the present study I am presenting only what I was able to establish with certainty. In gathering these contents I observed the principle of letting the people talk freely and only then asking direct questions, when it was a matter of checking the accuracy of what had already been noted. I am convinced that only this procedure -- albeit very time-consuming and hence for the traveling investigator often enough impossible -- can produce results that are uninfluenced by the thinking of the European

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• 124 investigators and therefore reflect, unclouded, the feelings of the savage.

128 Concerning the origin of the first two chapters of the fourth part, the tradition from primitive times and a comparative study of the /vi/ traditions of the Masai and the Israelites, etc., it should also be said that I first completed the former, in the form in which it appears, as a result of my research, and only afterwards did I approach a comparison with the traditions of the Bible. As alluring as it seemed to compare immediately what was told me by the Masai with Biblical accounts, I nevertheless had to resist this temptation, in order to avoid letting myself be unconsciously influenced in the manner of putting the questions in the checking. It may be mentioned further that it was not until the
114 123 773 fifth year after the beginning of the work on the present study that I came across the traditions from ancient times. That is, these are by no means common on people's lips, but are handed down in certain families, so that even in the larger Masai settlements one finds only very few old men who can relate them in detail. But even these few tell the investigator about them only when they know him intimately and know that he also knows them and their psyche intimately. Only when I had gone so far that [124] the people seriously discussed the question as to whether I might not have been one of them, perhaps from the time of their residence in their original homeland, did I learn about those traditions. Yet it still took one and a half years before I had searched out what is presented in the first chapter of the fourth part. I mention this here so that other investigators who turn their attention to the Masai in other regions may not allow themselves to become discouraged if their efforts remain for a long time without the hoped-for success.

128 In the second chapter of the same part I present, among other things, a series of conjectures -- not unfounded, I believe -- which make absolutely no claim of incontestable correctness. Although this already clearly follows from the wording, it may [121] be expressly pointed out here, especially for those who have something to find fault with in everything. I probably hardly need

121 educations usually regard them as savages and an embarrassment to the advancement of their country. Intentionally or otherwise, information from such sources is very likely to be biased.

123 [609] It is often difficult to get accurate information about the Masai from the Masai themselves. Being ultraconservative and suspicious, the Masai appear to regard with mistrust anyone who is pointedly interested in them or their livestock, and anyone in government. Their answers are affected by this attitude.

• 124 123 Interpreters are another, often-unrecognized source of misinformation even for the objective investigator. Whether the interpreter is a Masai or is from another tribe his interpretation may be affected by the factors discussed above. Interpreters frequently "interpret" what they think will please the questioner out of politeness and a desire to please. Occasionally interpreters misinterpret for other reasons. When the language interpreted was Swahili which I understood I have heard interpreters misinterpret when the true answer would have involved the interpreter in more work or an arduous journey. Another good example is the African who interpreted for an American anthropologist who spent several months living with the Masai, but did not learn

(23 the language well. After the anthropologist left, the
• (24 interpreter joyously told people how he had misled the American who had carefully written down the tall tales he had "interpreted" for him. Subsequently this "information" appeared as a learned dissertation.

(24 Difficulty in understanding the langauage is another problem, whether or not an interpreter is involved. An extreme example of this problem comes from the story of a high government official who was giving a speech about soil erosion to the Masai. He spoke gramatically perfect Coastal Swahili, which differs from the Up Country Swahili spoken around Masailand. Ending his speech on the theme that steps must be taken quickly to remedy the problem, he pointed dramatically to his watch and said, "The sands of time are running out!" The interpreter said," The Bwana says his watch is broken in the sand and he must go quickly."

Bearing in mind the above problems, although we have learned from discussions with Africans, Europeans and the Masai themselves, our information is based primarily on our own observations.

#122 Our relationship with the Masai: We speak very
124 little of the Masai language but we do know Up Country Swahili.

124 [191] Swahili. Many Masai in the area speak some Swahili, so using Swahili and a limited number of Masai nouns we usually could converse with Masai throughout the study area. Occasionally we had the services of interpreters.

123 [609] These Masai regard visitors in their country with interest and guarded suspicion. The suspicion is greatest if they believe the visitors are representatives of the Government. After we had lived on safari in Western Masailand for some months constantly moving from place to place the Masai appeared to accept us as a harmless, neutral, and occasionally interesting phenomenon.

[231] [181] Our status with them was helped by our work with grass and animals. Above all else the Masai appear concerned with animal husbandry. They have a lively interest in wild animals, appreciation for domestic livestock that is almost reverence, and an understanding of the importance of grass. Our work on these things therefore seemed understandable. Beyond the frequent initial query: were we with the Government, there was never any question of why we were working there. The Masai appear to accept without question that white men are prone to the strangest behavior. Movie companies and some tourists fortify this conviction.

123 beside a trail near a Masai village. In the early morning
921 a party of Africans from nearby Sukamaland raided the Masai village, killing at least one man and making off with the cattle. At dawn the Masai discovered their loss and ran off in full war regalia to intercept the raiders. Their route took them right through our camp where we were eating breakfast. Coming at a full run with spears and shields they looked rather fearsome, but as they passed they all waved and shouted greetings. Shortly thereafter they caught the raiders and bloodily recovered their stock.

123 Being in the position of neutral, nomadic
• 124 residents it seemed perfectly appropriate and natural for us to casually discuss mutual interests including livestock, grasses, weather and wildlife with passing Masai, and vice versa. Consequently our status in the area helped us greatly in obtaining information. What we were told by the Masai agreed with our own observations, and was often at variance with what they told visiting anthropologists and others.

*233 Social Organization: The Masai in the study
[221] area are essentially semi-nomadic pastoral people. Their
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